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**From:** Schollhamer, Mary [Schollhamer.Mary@epa.gov]  
**Sent:** 5/20/2020 7:14:25 PM  
**To:** Sawyers, Andrew [Sawyers.Andrew@epa.gov]  
**CC:** Miller, Wynne [Miller.Wynne@epa.gov]; Sylvester, Francis [Sylvester.Francis@epa.gov]; Gilbertson, Sue [gilbertson.sue@epa.gov]; Kloss, Christopher [Kloss.Christopher@epa.gov]; Lopez-Carbo, Maria [Lopez-Carbo.Maria@epa.gov]; Zobrist, Marcus [Zobrist.Marcus@epa.gov]; Molloy, Jennifer [molloy.jennifer@epa.gov]  
**Subject:** FOR YOUR REVIEW: MEDIA INQUIRY: Undercurrent News -- Aquaculture Permitting

Hi Andrew,

We received an inquiry from Undercurrent News on the aquaculture EO. Below are responses for your review. They've been cleared by Chris.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Thanks

**Has NOAA (via the executive order) been granted lead agency status for aquaculture permitting?**

The EO designates NOAA with some interagency coordination duties; for example NOAA is tasked with overseeing development of Environmental Impact Statements, in order to avoid duplication of efforts where multiple agencies have responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The EO does not change the Environmental Protection Agency's existing authorities to develop and issue NPDES permits.

**Will the process have to restart under NOAA or does the EPA intend to continue moving forward as lead agency for Velella Epsilon?**

No, the EPA is proceeding with the NPDES permitting action for the Velella Epsilon aquaculture operation.

**What about projects that haven't yet applied for federal waters aquaculture permits? What happens to them?**

As the agencies, e.g., the EPA and the Corps of Engineers, receive permit applications for new projects, they will coordinate certain efforts with NOAA consistent with the requirements of the EO. Those proposed operations will be permitted consistent with existing regulations.

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*Office of Wastewater Management: Solutions for Clean Water*

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**From:** Hackel, Angela <[Hackel.Angela@epa.gov](mailto:Hackel.Angela@epa.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 19, 2020 2:35 PM  
**To:** Risley, David <[Risley.David@epa.gov](mailto:Risley.David@epa.gov)>; Fuld, John <[Fuld.John@epa.gov](mailto:Fuld.John@epa.gov)>; Gordon, Brittney <[Gordon.Brittney@epa.gov](mailto:Gordon.Brittney@epa.gov)>; Klein, Melissa <[Klein.Melissa@epa.gov](mailto:Klein.Melissa@epa.gov)>  
**Subject:** FW: Undercurrent News -- Aquaculture Permitting

Hello,

Please see the below inquiry. In order to meet his deadline of noon on Thursday, could I get something back by 10:00 am on Thursday.

Thanks,

Angela

**From:** Jason Smith <[jason.smith@undercurrentnews.com](mailto:jason.smith@undercurrentnews.com)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, May 19, 2020 2:29 PM

**To:** Press <[Press@epa.gov](mailto:Press@epa.gov)>

**Subject:** Undercurrent News -- Aquaculture Permitting

Good afternoon.

My name is Jason Smith and I am a reporter with Undercurrent News, a trade publication that covers the global seafood industry. I'm writing a story about offshore aquaculture permitting, specifically how the process has changed due to President Trump's executive order on aquaculture and what happens to projects that are already in the permitting process.

For example, Velella Epsilon, an offshore yellowtail farm in the Gulf of Mexico, has been granted a draft NPEDS permit from EPA, and after a public hearing in November 2019, the EPA is currently working to respond to the comments received as it considers granting the project a final permit.

My understanding is that NOAA -- via the executive order -- has been once again granted lead agency status for aquaculture permitting, a status stripped from the agency after a 2018 court ruling. But after the court ruling, EPA had taken the lead in permitting the Velella project. So given that the permitting process is underway with EPA in the lead, will the process have to

restart under NOAA or does the EPA intend to continue moving forward as lead agency for Velella Epsilon?

What about projects that haven't yet applied for federal waters aquaculture permits? What happens to them?

Thanks for your time and assistance. I'd like to run this piece Thursday morning Seattle time.

Kind regards,

Jason Smith  
Americas Editor  
Undercurrent News  
206-496-9657